

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1529

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to voter registration.

Brief Description: Modifying voter registration provisions.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton, Chandler, Armstrong, Kenney, Moeller, Ormsby and Seaquist; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 1/31/07, 2/2/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires voter registrations acquired from drives to be returned within five days of receipt of the completed application.
- Specifies that a voter registration applicant that does not have a driver's license or Social Security number may vote a provisional ballot that will be counted only if identification is provided.
- Makes changes to the times that the voter registration database must be updated.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Green, Kretz, McDermott, Miloscia and Ormsby.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

Voter Registration Identity Verification

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A voter who registers by mail and indicates that he or she does not have a driver's license, state identification card, or Social Security number, must provide one piece of identification from a list of approved documents.

If one of the allowed forms of identification is not provided at the time of voting, a provisional ballot will be issued. The ballot may only be counted if the voter's signature on the outside envelope matches the signature in the voter registration records.

Voter Registration Drives

A person or organization that collects voter registration applications must transmit the forms to the Office of the Secretary of State (Secretary) or a county auditor at least weekly.

Maintenance of Voter Registration Rolls

The Secretary is required to conduct a quarterly review to update records of all registered voters on the statewide voter registration database. The quarterly review includes comparison of the database with lists maintained by the Department of Corrections, the Washington State Patrol, and the Office of the Administrator of the Courts. Periodically, the Secretary must remove the names of deceased voters from the database based on information prepared by the registrar of vital statistics.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Voter Registration Identity Verification

A voter who registers by mail and does not have a driver's license, state identification card, or Social Security number must vote a provisional ballot. Another form of identification must be provided no later than the day before certification of the primary or election in order for the ballot to be counted.

Voter Registration Drives

A person or organization that collects voter registration applications must transmit the forms to the Secretary or a county auditor within five days of receiving a completed form.

Maintenance of Voter Registration Rolls

The requirement that the Secretary conduct a quarterly review for purposes of updating the voter registration database is removed. Reviews based on a comparison of lists maintained by the Department of Corrections, the Washington State Patrol, and the Office of the Administrator of the Courts shall be conducted twice a year. Updates to remove the names of deceased voters from the database must be performed monthly rather than periodically.

Technical Clarifications and Repealed Statutes

Technical changes are made to clarify the process for registering to vote or transferring registration from one county to another. All provisions relating to out-of-state voters are removed.

Statutes related to: (1) the definition of out-of-state voter; (2) transmittal of information pertaining to the completion of all requirements of a felony conviction; and (3) required consultation with the information services board for the voter registration database, are each repealed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill clarifies that a person or organization collecting voter registration application forms must transmit the forms to the Secretary or a county auditor within five days of receipt of a completed form.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill makes important modification to voter registration procedures. The bill is mostly housekeeping. There is no need to have a separate category for out-of-state voters because they are the same as voters who vote by mail. Changing the time for the submittal of voter application forms from weekly to five days stems from an incident last summer in which some applications were held too long. The language for quarterly screenings of the voter registration database is vague. Many of the screenings are done monthly. Screening for felons four times a year interferes with the spring elections because of the 30-day requirement for due process. It is recommended that this be done twice a year. The Secretary of State does not need to receive certifications of discharge, as they are available through the county clerk's office.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Appleton, prime sponsor; and Katie Blinn, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.